

# Effective recruitment - An easy guide

(Round pegs for round holes)



## 1. The costs of staff turnover is higher than you think, some of the costs are:

- Recruitment costs - The cost of the recruitment process will vary but a budget of 10% to 15% of the employee's annual salary should be allowed. This includes agency and advertising costs, staff costs for the process and all the other hidden costs in the process.
- Training costs - A new starter costs money in training before they actually contribute. The costs are both for any formal skills training and those of the other staff who have to provide assistance.
- Efficiency costs - It takes many months for any new employee to become fully productive and effective. It normally takes 3 months to find out where the paper clips are stored!

***The total costs of recruitment can be anything up to 50% of the employee's salary; it is worthwhile making sure that you don't have to do it too often!***

## 2. Steps to recruitment:

- Advertising - Getting the advertisement right is the first step:
  - An accurate job title is essential.
  - The advertisement has to "sell" the job and its good points.
  - Get the right paper or journal, not many Finance Directors read "New Scientist"!
  - Your customers and other staff also see a job advertisement. Make sure it says the right things about your company.
- Agencies and head-hunters - You know what you are looking for in a candidate. Agencies must also know otherwise they cannot put the right people in front of you. Agencies will give you what they have on their books but are useful for reducing the workload of initial responses. Head-hunters are for when you want to keep it quiet, the initial expenses are high but for the right person they can be very effective.
- CV - Use the CV to sort for interview, not to select for the job. Go for the person not the paper!
- Testing - Psychometrics and other tests (graphology?) can be useful but need expert analysis and there is no substitute for incorporating real work into the testing process e.g. "in-tray" exercises.
- References - These are widely used but would you submit a written reference that was not glowing or include the name of somebody who wouldn't say good things about you?

***Plan the whole process at the start so that it goes smoothly in the execution.***

## 3. Analysing a CV:

The CV gives many hints to a person's character but it is *not* their character. Use the CV to sort, not select.

- Layout - Is the layout tidy and accurate (attention to detail and organised), or crammed (unplanned and untidy approach)?
- Language - Look for strong words (managed, controlled etc.) rather than weak words (co-ordinated, attended etc.) as indicators of their approach to work. Look for correct spelling and grammar
- Timings - Check that all the time is accounted for e.g. is 1985-1987 really just 12/85 to 01/87!
- Achievements - Look for achievements and not just responsibilities.
- Inconsistencies - Look for inconsistencies e.g. does the job title match the job description
- Use a checklist of your "must haves" and "desirables" to score each CV quickly.

***CVs are to exclude those who do not fit the "must have" criteria. Use other techniques for final selection.***

#### **4. Effective interviewing:**

The interview is an opportunity for assessment of the candidate for the job and the job for the candidate. You are being assessed as well! They have passed the CV test and have the basic skills. The interview can show you what else is on offer. Use open questions to get better responses.

- **Approach to work** - How will they work? Every question in an interview is a "work task" and the way the candidate approaches these tasks will tell you how they will work in real life. Do they rush? Do they consider and define? Do they complete the task? The answers are nearly irrelevant but the method for getting to the answer is vital.
- **Perseverance** - Failing is not a problem (as long as it is not a habit!) - It is not whether you fall down or not - it is if whether you get up afterwards that really counts. What was their most challenging project, what were the difficulties and how were they overcome?
- **Achievement** - What were the "Projects Completed" (see Easy Guide 1), what were the achievements, and what was the impact? What were their failures and how did they deal with them?
- **Values** - You need the right cultural fit for any organisation. Does the job fit their social needs? What are their values and do they match the organisation's values?
- **Motivation** - Why are they applying for the job and why they are leaving their current employer. Can you fulfil their needs and do you want to?
- **Strengths and weaknesses** - Most people are not happy to talk about weaknesses, ask about strengths and then look at the reverse of the strength. "He who hesitates is lost" versus "Act in haste, repent at leisure". If their strength is "rapid decision making" then probe to find if they have good judgement skills.
- **Social skills** - Do they have any and do they need them? Look for areas of possible conflict in the organisation.
- **Initiative** - Probe about projects that they have initiated and run (see Easy Guides 1 & 8). To maintain the status quo then you need an administrator, a manager's only real job is to start and manage change. If they don't have initiative then they will never be a manager.

***Interviewing is to see if they have the soft skills and requirements. They shouldn't be there if they don't have the qualifications.***

#### **5. The sins of interviewing - what not to do:**

- **Never interview alone** - Always have either multiple interviews or multiple interviewers so that you get several opinions and they get several viewpoints.
- **Never talk too much** - Talking too much may make you feel good but it is not a good interview. The less you say the more you will learn about the candidate and that is what the interview is for. Put the candidate at ease, present the company and then get them to talk through open questions.
- **Never make it an interrogation** - Give the candidate a chance to question you. The questions they ask you can show as much about them as the answers they give.
- **Never wing it** - Do your research on the job and the candidate. Prepare and use a checklist of standard questions for all candidates to get consistent answers.
- **Never have a "mind set"** about the ideal candidate (especially one who thinks just like you) - Check that the basic skills are present and then look for the extras that can add value to the job. The extras come for free so it pays to get the most you can!
- **Never use instinct** - Use your checklist to make rational choices. Liking a candidate is no reason to hire them. An interview is to find the best person for a job not to find new friends!
- **Never stick rigidly to a script** - Use your checklist but always be alert to follow-up or probe the candidate on comments. You can always return to the script after getting clarification.

***Interviewing should be structured to get the most information.***